DARK MYSTERIES

#7

TERROR OF THE KILLER PLANT

THE TERROR OF THE KILLER PLANT

OH NO! THIS PLANT IS KILLING ME.... STOP IT LENORE!

MIX TOGETHER AN OBSESSED SCIENTIST, A BEAUTIFUL WOMAN AND A KILLER IN THE NIGHT... THE RESULT?...**DEATH!** OUR TALE WILL FILL YOU WITH HORROR AND FEAR AS WE JOURNEY TO THE LAND OF THE SUPERNATURAL WHERE YOU WILL MEET...

THE PLANT THAT KILLS!

OUR STORY OPENS AT THE NEWTON SCIENTIFIC FOUNDATION... A SPECIAL MEETING HAS BEEN CALLED...

DR. PARKER, THIS MEETING WAS CALLED BECAUSE THE FOUNDATION HAS RECEIVED SOME RATHER SPECTACULAR REPORTS ON THE EXPERIMENT YOU'VE BEEN WORKING ON.

YES, DR. JOHNSTON?

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NATURALLY, WE DON'T WISH TO PRY INTO YOUR SECRET WORK... BUT IT IS YOUR DUTY TO CAST NO UNFAVORABLE REFLECTIONS UPON US NOW CAN YOU TELL US SOME-THING OF YOUR WORK?

I'LL BE HAPPY TO, GENTLEMEN! IT IS AN EXPERIMENT WHICH WILL CHANGE THE COURSE OF HISTORY...

...IN A SHORT TIME, I WILL TURN PLANTS *INTO HUMAN BEINGS!*

WHAT ! HE MUST BE CRAZY! IMPOSSIBLE!

BY INJECTING *HUMAN BLOOD* AND MY SECRET FORMULA INTO YOUNG PLANTS, I'M CONVINCED...

BLOOD AND FORMULA... *HA! HA!* WHAT A LAUGH! *HA! HA!* RIDICULOUS! *HA! HA!*

BEFORE THE MEETING COULD BE CALLED TO ORDER, PARKER, IN A FIT OF FURY, STALKED OUT...

LAUGH, YOU FOOLS... BUT SOON, YOU'LL COME BEGGING MY FORGIVENESS FOR YOUR STUPIDITY!

I'LL SHOW THEM! I'LL SHOW THE WORLD! THERE'LL BE NO LAUGHTER THEN!

WHEN DR. PARKER REACHED HIS PRIVATE LABOR-ATORY ON THE OUTSKIRTS OF TOWN...

LEWIS, DARLING, HOW DID IT GO? WAS THE BOARD IMPRESSED? DID TH...

THEY'RE IDIOTS, LENORE! BLIND STUPID IDIOTS! BUT WE WILL SHOW THEM... IF IT IS THE LAST THING I DO ON THIS EARTH, I'LL MAKE THEM TAKE BACK THEIR LAUGHTER!

LAUGHTER! HOW DARE THEY LAUGH AT THE GREATEST SCIENTIST THIS COUNTRY WAS EVER BLESSED WITH? OH, LEWIS, I LOVE YOU SO!

THANK YOU, MY DARLING. YOU'RE A GREAT COMFORT AND HELP TO ME, BUT LET'S GET TO WORK NOW!

LENORE FRANKLIN HAD BEEN DR PARKER'S ASSISTANT FOR OVER A YEAR, SHE WAS CONVINCED HE WAS A GENIUS...

DR. PARKER AND LEVORE PROCEEDED TO THE BACK PART OF THE LABORATORY WHERE THE EXPERIMENTAL PLANT WAS KEPT...

WHILE YOU WERE GONE, I CHARTED THE PLANT'S BREATHING AND GROWTH.

ITS GROWTH HAS BEEN TWICE AS FAST SINCE WE'VE INCREASED THE AMOUNT OF BLOOD!

AND THEN IT WAS TIME TO 'FEED' THE PLANT...

THE PLANT IS NOW GETTING ALMOST A HALF PINT OF BLOOD A PAY. WE'VE EACH BEEN GIVING A QUARTER OF A PINT APIECE... BUT I WONDER... I'M AFRAID IT WON'T BE ENOUGH!

IF WE GIVE ANY MORE, OF OUR OWN BLOOD, WE'LL SCARCELY BE ABLE TO WALK AROUND.

WE'VE ALREADY REALIZED THAT ...BUT NOTHING MUST INTERFERE WITH THE PLANT'S GROWTH! WE'LL HAVE TO GET BLOOP FROM OTHER SOURCES!

A WEEK LATER-

IT'S GROWN THREE INCHES IN LESS THAN A WEEK! I KNEW I COULD DO IT! I KNEW IT!

LEWIS! COME QUICKLY! I-I THINK IT'S MOVING!

IT STARTED TO TWITCH WHEN WE INCREASED THE INJECTION OF BLOOD!

IT WANTS MORE! IT'S GOT TO HAVE MORE BLOOD!

LENORE AND THE DOCTOR GAVE THE PLANT AS MUCH BLOOD AS THEY POSSIBLY COULD ...BUT STILL THE PLANT WRITHED AND TWITCHED WITH HUNGER... PARKER GREW FRANTIC AS IT SEEMED THE PLANT MIGHT DIE FROM LACK OF BLOOD...

FOOLS! IDIOTS! THE BLOOD BANKS WON'T SELL US EVEN A QUART!

LEWIS, WHAT WILL WE DO?

THE EVENING NEWSPAPER SUPPLIED THE ANSWER...

LENORE, IT'S ALL RIGHT! I KNOW WHERE TO GET THE BLOOD! I KNOW THE RELIGIOUS BELIEFS OF THAT CULT... AND THE BODY WON'T BE EMBALMED!

MAHANTRA LOA, ONE OF THE FEW REMAINING MEM BERS OF A FAR EASTERN CUL DIES AT HOME. FUNERAL SERVICES WILL BE HELD

LOVE IS

LOVE JANE

IT SHOULD BE RIGHT OVER THERE...

AND A FEW MINUTES LATER...

WITHIN AN HOUR THE PLANT WILL BE FED... MANY THANKS, MR. LOA!

MANHANT

PARKER WAS RIGHT. WITHIN THE NEXT HOUR...

LOOK HOW IT MOVES TOWARD THE SYRINGE! LENORE, THERE'S NO DOUBT OF IT... WE'RE MAKING PROGRESS!

I'M SURE OF IT TOO, LEWIS... IF ONLY THE BLOOD HOLDS OUT!

THE BLOOD FROM THE STOLEN BODY LASTED TEN DAYS, AND THEN...

IT'S BEEN TWO DAYS SINCE THE PLANT GOT OVER A PINT OF BLOOD! IT LOOKS AWFUL!

IT'S STARVING... MY EXPERIMENT, MY DREAM IS DYING FROM *HUNGER!* I WON'T LET THIS HAPPEN... I'LL DO *ANYTHING* TO FEED IT!

IN A SECTION OF THE TOWN NOT FAR FROM THE PROFESSOR'S LABORATORY ANOTHER MAN WAS SCREAMING A KILLER HAD ESCAPED FROM PRISON!

WARDEN, RAPHEL'S ESCAPED! HE MADE IT OVER THE WALL!

WHAT! GOOD LORD, HE WAS SUPPOSED TO BE EXECUTED IN A WEEK! SEND OUT A STATE-WIDE ALARM! HE'S GOT TO BE CAUGHT!

DR. PARKER IGNORED LENORE'S PROTESTS AND TOOK HUGE QUANTITIES OF BLOOD FROM THE STRANGER'S VEINS...

OH, L-LEWIS...YOU'RE KILLING HIM! HE'S DYING!

PERHAPS HE IS...BUT THE PLANT LIVES ON!

WITH ONE LAST SHUDDER THE BODY OF THE STRANGER GAVE UP ITS LIFE... WITH THAT, LENORE BROKE UNDER THE STRAIN...

YOU'RE A KILLER! A VICIOUS HEARTLESS KILLER!

WHAT THE...

LENORE AND THE PROFESSOR STRUGGLED VIOLENTLY...BUT IN THE MIDST OF THE BATTLE...

YOU IDIOT! LET GO OF THAT SYRINGE!

I WON'T! I... AGHRRR!

AND LENORE HAD JABBED HERSELF WITH A SYRINGE!

THE SIGHT OF HIS SWEETHEART LYING IN A POOL OF BLOOD ON THE FLOOR SUDDENLY BROUGHT PARKER TO HIS SENSES...

OH, GOOD LORD... W-WHAT HAVE I DONE! LENORE, MY DARLING! Y-YOU'RE DYING!

IN HIS PANIC, DR PARKER HIT UPON A DESPERATE PLAN...

T-THERE'S ONE CHANCE LEFT...SHE'S LOST SO MUCH BLOOD! PERHAPS AN INJECTION OF NEW BLOOD WILL RESTORE HER TO ME! I'LL TAKE THE BLOOD FROM THE PLANT... WITHOUT HER I AM LOST.

AND SO, HEEDLESS OF THE LOSS OF HIS EXPERIMENT, DR. PARKER TOOK THE KILLER'S BLOOD FROM THE PLANT, AND INJECTED IT INTO THE VEINS OF LENORE...

MINUTES LATER...

ONE OF OUR SHOTS MUST'VE GOTTEN HIM JUST AS HE WENT OVER THE WALL, WARPEN! WE FOUND SOME BLOOD STAINS A FEW FEET AWAY FROM THE SPOT WHERE HE LANDED!

GOOD! THAT SHOULD SLOW HIM UP SOME!

LATER THAT NIGHT, BACK AT DR. PARKER'S LABORATORY...

WHAT CAN I DO? IF SOMETH... WHAT'S THAT? ... SOUNDS LIKE SOMETHING DROPPED AGAINST THE BACK DOOR.

IT'S A MAN!... AND HE'S BEEN WOUNDED! LENORE! COME QUICKLY! I NEED YOU!

DOCTOR PARKER M.D.

THEY GOT THE MAN INSIDE... THEY DIDN'T KNOW IT WAS RAPHEL THE KILLER!

THE BULLET ENTERED HIS RIGHT SHOULDER... IT'S NOT TOO SERIOUS. HE LOST A LOT OF BLOOD WHICH HAS WEAKENED HIM.

WE'D BETTER CALL THE POLICE... HE NEEPS HOSPITAL CARE!

WAIT! DON'T CALL THEM! I'VE GOT ANOTHER PLAN!

WHAT DO YOU MEAN?

DON'T YOU SEE... THIS MAN IS THE ANSWER TO OUR PRAYERS! HE'LL PROVIDE THE BLOOD THE PLANT NEEDS!

OH, LEWIS... IT DOESN'T SEEM RIGHT! THIS MAN'S ALIVE! IF YOU TAKE BLOOD FROM HIM, HE'LL DIE!

DON'T BE SILLY, LITTLE FOOL! WHAT'S ONE MAN'S LIFE IN COMPARISON WITH OUR WORK?

I-IT'S SO INHUMAN, LEWIS!

AND A MINUTE LATER...

I-IT'S WORKING! SHE'S MOVING SLIGHTLY! YOU'RE ALIVE, LENORE, YOU'RE ALIVE...

OHHHH.

BUT THE PROFESSOR'S JOY QUICKLY TURNED INTO AMAZEMENT AND HORROR, AS HE WATCHED LENORE HE SAW...

S-SHE'S CHANGING... OH, DEAR LORD, IT'S HIDEOUS! MY SWEET-HEART'S TURNING INTO A PLANT...

SAVE ME! SAVE ME!

WITH RAPHEL'S BLOOD, THE PLANT HAD BE-COME A KILLER.

AND SO HAD LENORE!

STAY BACK! D-DON'T COME ANY NEARER! STOP... DON'T YOU SEE... IT'S ME, PARKER ...THE MAN YOU LOVE! LENORE, NO! NO!

STOP!...I-I CAN'T BREATHE... I... AGHRRRRR!

PARKER'S SCREAMS BROUGHT THE POLICE IN FROM NEARBY. WHEN THEY ARRIVED...

I-IT'S DR.PARKER! H-HE'S DEAD!

LOOKS LIKE HE'S BEEN STRANGLED!

A-AND THERE'S ANOTHER BODY HERE! AND A STRANGE PLANT!

AND A HALF HOUR LATER...

THAT'S DANNY RAPHEL! HE BROKE OUT OF THE PEN EARLY TONIGHT! WHAT'S HE DOING HERE?

I DON'T KNOW... FUNNY, HE WAS SUPPOSED TO BE HANGED IN JUST A WEEK!... *FOR STRANGLING TWO MEN TO DEATH!*

HEY, BOYS, HERE'S ANOTHER MYSTERY! A WOMAN'S HAND-KERCHIEF...SMELLING OF PERFUME...BUT SOAKED IN BLOOP! WHERE'S HIS SECRETARY?

WHAT A MESS...TWO DEAD BODIES, A HANDKERCHIEF SOAKED IN BLOOD... AND NO EXPLANATION FOR ANY OF IT!

YOU KNOW, JIM, I'VE GOT A FEELING THIS CASE WON'T EVER BE SOLVED! I DON'T THINK WE'LL EVER KNOW WHAT WENT ON IN THIS ROOM TONIGHT!

THE EXPERIMENT HAD WORK-ED... BUT NOT AS THE DOCTOR EXPECTED. THE NEW KILLER PLANT STRANGLED THE DOCTOR!

BUT IF THE POLICE ONLY KNEW IT, THE OLD EXPRESSION, "*BLOOD WILL TELL*," WOULD EXPLAIN THE PUZZLE... FOR THE BLOOD OF THE STRANGLER, DANNY RAPHEL, IN THE DEAD BODY OF LENORE, SOUGHT AND GAINED ITS REVENGE ON LEWIS PARKER!

THE END